Five Questions About Vibrio

What is Vibrio?
• Vibrio vulnificus is a bacteria commonly found in warm, brackish, and salt water, and in shellfish, especially during the summer months.
• Infection is rare, yet it can be a serious disease.

How Can I Get Vibrio?
• Exposing open wounds, cuts, or scratches of the skin to brackish or salt water.
• Eating raw or undercooked shellfish, especially oysters.

Who Is At Risk?
• People with weakened immune systems, particularly those with chronic liver disease.
• Healthy people are rarely affected, but could develop a mild infection.

What Are The Symptoms?
• Symptoms and signs of Vibrio illness may include vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain, or fever.
• Vibrio infection of the skin may lead to skin breakdown and skin ulcers.
• The bacteria can invade the bloodstream, causing a severe and life-threatening illness. Signs and symptoms of severe Vibrio illness may include fever, chills, decreased blood pressure (septic shock), and blistering skin lesions.

What Can I Do?
• Keep brackish and salt water away from open wounds.
• Wear foot protection when walking in the sand or in the water.
• Do not eat raw shellfish. Cook shellfish thoroughly before eating.
• Do not let ready-to-eat foods come into contact with raw shellfish or its juices.

For more information, please contact the Florida Department of Health in Escambia County at 850-595-6683, or visit www.EscambiaHealth.com